

ES

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General Believed to Plot Against Aquino

The Central Intelligence Agency has been tracking the mysterious operations of Gen. Fabian Ver, former chief of staff of the Philippine armed forces, who reportedly is plotting to overthrow President Corazon Aquino.

Intelligence sources believe he has formed a "death squad" that is ready to eliminate any Filipino leaders who stand in his way. According to these sources, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile has already received death threats for his role in boosting Aquino to power.

Enrile has tightened his security; he is constantly guarded by an elite security force of 600 crack troops. But he has also tried to placate Ver's partisans by speaking out against Aquino and accusing her of courting the communist insurgents.

News reports have suggested that Enrile is maneuvering to run against Aquino in the next election. But the truth is that he is afraid of Ver and is merely trying to save his own skin, our sources say.

Under the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, Enrile and Ver were close friends. In fact, Enrile has confided to intimates that he urged Marcos to appoint Ver as chief of staff. But when the dictatorship came crashing down, the friendship broke up. Enrile abandoned Marcos and ordered his troops to support Aquino. An embittered Ver fled to America with Marcos.

Intelligence sources now report that Ver has been flying back and forth between the United States and Southeast Asia, meeting with cohorts and building an underground to oppose Aquino.

While he was chief of staff, Ver directed the

security operations that cracked down on Marcos' opponents. He was in charge of "special security projects" that not only hounded exiles who dared to oppose Marcos but eliminated some of the most troublesome.

Ver developed a particularly close relationship with President Marcos' wife, Imelda. At one time, their operations inside the United States came under the scrutiny of the Defense Intelligence Agency. A secret DIA report claimed that Ver and Imelda Marcos stacked the Philippine Embassy in Washington.

Declared the report: "The new team is . . . expected to monitor Philippine dissident activity in the United States. The attaches will undoubtedly report on, and possibly operate against, anti-Marcos Philippine activists in the United States."

Their top target in America was Marcos' archrival, Benigno Aquino. The DIA reported that Imelda Marcos secretly called on Aquino in May 1983, and warned him that he might be assassinated if he returned to the Philippines.

Aquino disregarded the warning, later returned home and was gunned down as he stepped off the plane. This cold-blooded murder precipitated the dramatic events that led to Marcos' downfall and his replacement by Aquino's widow.

Ver is now wanted in the Philippines for allegedly plotting the assassination. Intelligence sources say that, meanwhile, he is directing a shadowy operation to oust President Aquino and erase the Aquino name from Philippine politics once and for all.